



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[OMB 3060-1256; FR ID 128220]

Information Collection Being Reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork burdens, and as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or the Commission) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the following information collection. Comments are requested concerning: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; the accuracy of the Commission's burden estimate; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and ways to further reduce the information collection burden on small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees. The FCC may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number. No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the PRA that does not display a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

DATES: Written PRA comments should be submitted on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]**. If you anticipate that you will be submitting comments, but find it difficult to do so within the period of time allowed by this notice, you should advise the contact listed below as soon as possible.

ADDRESSES: Direct all PRA comments to Nicole Ongele, FCC, via email PRA@fcc.gov and to nicole.ongele@fcc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For additional information about the information collection, contact Nicole Ongele, (202) 418-2991.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

OMB Control Number: 3060-1256.

Title: Application for Connect America Fund Phase II and Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction Support.

Form Number: FCC Form 683.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit entities, Not-for-profit institutions, and State, Local or Tribal governments.

Number of Respondents and Responses: 530 respondents and 930 responses.

Estimated Time per Response: 2-12 hours (on average).

Frequency of Response: Annual reporting requirements, on occasion reporting requirement.

Obligation to Respond: Required to obtain or retain benefits. Statutory authority for this information collection 47 U.S.C. 154, 214, 254 and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

Total Annual Burden: 5,860 hours.

Total Annual Cost: No cost.

Nature and Extent of Confidentiality: Although most information collected in FCC Form 683 will be made available for public inspection, the Commission will withhold certain information collected in FCC Form 683 from routine public inspection. Specifically, the Commission will treat certain financial and technical information submitted in FCC Form 683 as confidential. In addition, an applicant may use the abbreviated process under 47 CFR 0.459(a)(4) to request confidential treatment of the audited financial statements that are submitted during the post-selection review process. However, if a request for public inspection for this technical or financial information is made under 47 CFR 0.461, and the applicant has any objections to disclosure, the applicant will be notified and will be required to justify continued confidential treatment. To the extent that an applicant seeks to have other information collected in FCC Form 683 or during the post-selection review process withheld from public inspection, the applicant may request confidential treatment pursuant to 47 CFR 0.459.

Privacy Act Impact Assessment: No impact(s).

Needs and Uses:

Connect America Fund Phase II Auction

The Commission is requesting the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for this revised information collection. On November 18, 2011, the Commission released the *USF/ICC Transformation Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., FCC 11-161 (*USF/ICC Transformation Order and/or FNPRM*), which comprehensively reformed and modernized the high-cost program within the universal service fund to focus support on networks capable of providing voice and broadband services. Among other things, the Commission created the Connect America Fund (CAF) and concluded that support in price cap areas would be provided through a combination of “a new forward-looking model of the cost of constructing modern multi-purpose networks” and a competitive bidding process (CAF Phase II auction or Auction 903). The Commission also sought comment in the accompanying *USF/ICC Transformation FNPRM* on proposed rules governing the CAF Phase II auction, including basic auction design and the application process.

In the CAF Phase II auction, service providers competed to receive support of up to \$1.98 billion over 10 years to offer voice and broadband service in unserved high-cost areas. The information collection requirements reported under this collection are the result of several Commission decisions to implement the reform adopted in the *USF/ICC Transformation Order* and move forward with conducting the CAF Phase II auction. In the *April 2014 Connect America Order*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., FCC 14-54, the Commission adopted various rules regarding participation in the CAF Phase II auction, the term of support, and the eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation process. In the *Phase II Auction Order*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., FCC 16-64, the Commission adopted rules to govern the CAF Phase II auction, including the adoption of a two-stage application process, which includes a pre-auction short-form application to be submitted by parties interested in bidding in the CAF Phase II auction and a post-auction long-form application that must be submitted by winning bidders seeking to become authorized to receive CAF Phase II auction support. The Commission concluded, based on its experience with auctions and consistent with the record, that this two-stage application process balances the need to collect information essential to conducting a successful auction and authorizing CAF Phase II support with administrative efficiency.

On January 30, 2018, the Commission adopted a public notice that established the final procedures for the CAF Phase II auction, including the long-form application disclosure and certification requirements for

winning bidders seeking to become authorized to receive CAF Phase II auction support. *See Phase II Auction Procedures Public Notice*, WC Docket No. 17-182 et al., FCC 18-6. The Commission also adopted the *Phase II Auction Order on Reconsideration*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., FCC 18-5, which modified the Commission's letter of credit rules to provide some additional relief for CAF Phase II auction support recipients by reducing the costs of maintaining a letter of credit. On January 19, 2023, WCB released a public notice announcing that the Commission had concluded its review of CAF Phase II auction long-form applications. *See WCB Concludes CAF II Application Review, Long-Forms Made Public*, AU Docket No. 17-182 et al., DA 23-49.

The Commission proposes to eliminate the information collection requirements related to the CAF Phase II auction FCC Form 683 now that the Commission's review of CAF Phase II auction long-form applications has concluded. All other information collection requirements remain unchanged.

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction

On February 7, 2020 the Commission released the *Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Order*, WC Docket Nos. 19-126, 10-90, FCC 20-5 which will commit up to \$20.4 billion over the next decade to support up to gigabit speed broadband networks in rural America. The funding was allocated through a multi-round, reverse, descending clock auction that favored faster services with lower latency and encouraged intermodal competition in order to ensure that the greatest possible number of Americans will be connected to the best possible networks, all at a competitive cost.

To implement the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction (or Auction 904), the Commission adopted new rules for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction, including the adoption of a two-stage application process. Like with the CAF Phase II auction, this process includes a pre-auction short-form application to be submitted by parties interested in bidding in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction (FCC Form 183) and a post-auction long-form application that must be submitted by winning bidders (or their designees) seeking to become authorized to receive Rural Digital Opportunity Fund support (FCC Form 683). The Commission received approval for the short-form application (FCC Form 183) in a separate collection under the OMB control number 3060-1252.

This information collection includes the disclosures and certifications adopted by the Commission that must be made by winning bidders seeking to become authorized for Rural Digital Opportunity Fund

support and the requirement that Rural Digital Opportunity Fund support recipients maintain a letter of credit. Any additional revisions or new collections for OMB review that address other reforms adopted in the Order will be submitted at a later date.

The Commission therefore proposes to revise this information collection to maintain these Rural Digital Opportunity Fund requirements.

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene Dortch,
Secretary.
Office of the Secretary.

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